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Tuesday, 12 October 1993 at 10 a.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mrs. des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago): It is with immense pride that I congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Your election to this important position is a tribute to the active and constructive role played by Guyana in international affairs over the years. It is also a tribute to your own personal integrity and diplomatic acumen. As a fellow representative of a member State of the Caribbean Community, I am confident that you will bring to the deliberations ahead the necessary measure of impartiality and astuteness that will be indispensable in reconciling the differing views on the many complex issues before us.

My delegation joins in welcoming the six newest Members admitted into this family of nations in 1993: Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, Monaco, the Slovak Republic and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. These new Members, all of which are relatively small, can draw some inspiration from the election to the presidency of the General Assembly of a representative from Guyana, the smallest developing country in terms of population, ever to assume that position. For indeed, small States must continue to be afforded every opportunity to be full and active contributors to the collective search for peace, security and economic and social advancement for all.

All States, particularly the more vulnerable among us, can derive much hope and encouragement from the developments of September 1993, which set the course for a new relationship between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and improved prospects for peace in the Middle East. The historic exchange of letters of recognition between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Chairman Yasser Arafat, and the subsequent signing of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement, which extends limited interim self-government to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho in the West Bank, constitute a momentous development in the turbulent and violent history of the region.

Who among us could have anticipated that, in the midst of current growing tensions and conflicts worldwide, such sworn enemies in the perennial theatre of conflict in the Middle East would have conceded so much in the pursuit of a better future? In today's troubled times, these bold partners in peace have renewed the faith of many the world over in the capacity of diplomacy, political will and enlightened self-interest to overcome decades of hatred, mistrust and fear. We all recognize the tremendous difficulties and challenges ahead. Trinidad and Tobago wishes these leaders well and urges active United Nations involvement in assisting all parties concerned in a smooth transition from a state of belligerence to one of cooperation and peaceful co-existence. Given the centrality of the Palestinian question to the conflict in the Middle East, all parties need to work indefatigably to translate this initial success into a comprehensive and durable peace for the region.

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A similar concerted response on the part of the United Nations and the international community will be imperative in assisting the people of South Africa in their transition to a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa. After more than 45 years of anguished attention to the despair, suffering and injustice in that country, the provision of token measures of assistance would be unacceptable.

If the world is to give any credence to the United Nations new thrust towards post-conflict peace-building, a tangible commitment to the success of the transition in South Africa needs to be made. We therefore join the call for an enhanced United Nations presence in South Africa, a presence that is urgently needed prior to the elections of April 1994. Trinidad and Tobago is taking the necessary steps to implement the decision taken on 8 October by the Assembly to lift economic sanctions against South Africa (resolution 48/1). It is our hope that the international community will respond positively and generously to this historic decision; and that it will quickly lead to the provision of ample financial and technical assistance, as well as to appropriate investments, that will allow a new non-racial Government to begin redressing the grave inequalities in all aspects of life in South Africa. We also hope that, in time, the advancement of greater economic and social equity in South Africa will mitigate, and eventually resolve, other problems that are the legacy of apartheid, including the rampant and widespread violence which threatens the process of transformation in the country.

Over the years the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago have faithfully monitored the progress of the South African people on their arduous journey to this critical point in their history. We have adhered assiduously to the various sanctions and other restrictive measures adopted against South Africa by the United Nations. Within our limited means we have also extended a helping hand to the victims of apartheid. Trinidad and Tobago has shared in the anguish of South Africans in their long struggle against the racist system of apartheid. We will also rejoice with them in their victory as we anxiously await the dawn of a free, just, non-racial and prosperous society in South Africa.

Here at the United Nations let us seek to emulate the courage and statesmanship recently demonstrated by the major political actors in the Middle East and South Africa. We too must seize the opportunities for peace and seek to employ fully the machinery at our disposal in the active pursuit of a better future. Amid the growing anxieties and insecurities pervading many societies, member States have a collective responsibility to the millions around the globe who continue to repose much faith and hope in this Organization and its ability to address successfully the myriad political, economic, environmental and social problems now confronting us all. Trinidad and Tobago therefore joins in celebrating a reinvigorated United Nations, which is seeking to have a more meaningful impact on the lives of the world's peoples.

Trinidad and Tobago applauds the heightened involvement of the United Nations in the effort to restore democracy to Haiti and to secure the safe return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the helm of a legitimate constitutional government. The United Nations, with its active involvement in the organization of the 1990 elections in Haiti, facilitated the free expression by the Haitian people of their unfulfilled dreams and yearnings for freedom and a decent standard of life. It is therefore only fitting that this Organization, with the consent of the legitimate government of Haiti, should provide maximum support to efforts to guarantee a peaceful return to democracy and national reconciliation in that country, without which those dreams would not be realized.

Trinidad and Tobago is concerned at the serious deterioration in the situation in Haiti since the welcome signing in July of this year of the Governors Island Agreement and the New York Pact. We deplore the flagrant violations of human rights and the blood-letting, which must be stopped. We express the hope that international efforts to establish a new police force in Haiti and to professionalize its armed forces will lead to greater guarantees of life and liberty in Haiti. My delegation takes this opportunity to commend the Special Envoy for Haiti, Mr. Dante Caputo, as well as the able staff of the international Civilian Mission in Haiti for their invaluable contribution towards resolving the crisis.

Developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Somalia are among the more worrisome of those in which the United Nations has been involved, particularly in view of the Organization's inability to stem the tide of violence and suffering. United Nations interventions in these areas are also increasingly being regarded as test cases for the new United Nations of the post-cold-war era.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the horror and savagery of the persistent attacks on innocent civilians, particularly on the Muslim population, have elicited entirely inadequate responses from the international community. Notwithstanding the efforts of the United Nations Protection Force and the various international and non-governmental humanitarian organizations, thousands continue to starve, are expelled from their homes and

regions, or perish at the hands of perpetrators of genocide and "ethnic cleansing". Yet, despite threats of punishment on the part of the Security Council, these and other atrocities are committed with impunity, while violent attempts to dismember the sovereign State of Bosnia and Herzegovina persist. The United Nations can ill afford to fail Bosnia and Herzegovina, for that failure will have serious repercussions in the region and beyond, as well as repercussions for the Organization.

We have also witnessed alarming developments in Somalia. In the early stages of United Nations involvement in the country it was faced with a unique combination of factors, including massive starvation and famine, widespread violence, the ready availability among the populace of weaponry of varying sophistication, and a total absence of any centralized authority. Today, with the assistance of the United Nations and other organizations, Somalis of good will can be proud of the successes achieved in breaking the backbone of the devastating famine and in making significant, though limited, strides towards the restoration of civil government and political reconciliation.

It is impossible, however, to be oblivious to the major military engagements in the Somali capital of Mogadishu, which have led to tragic loss of life and have seriously imperilled the United Nations operation in that limited area. Trinidad and Tobago deplores the vicious attacks on the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), which could ultimately derail efforts to restore peace and security to the country and frustrate the attainment by the Somali people of their goals and aspirations.

We also support the call for urgent steps to be taken to ensure the safety and security of the tens of thousands of men and women who are engaged in these difficult and dangerous United Nations peace-keeping operations around the world.

The extent of human suffering and instability now being experienced as a consequence of general economic stagnation is as disconcerting and disheartening as that visited upon us by war and strife. Many communities are in the midst of economic and social crisis. Poverty, unemployment and crime are increasingly threatening the very fabric of societies and are clamouring for the concerted attention of the international community. The United Nations must heed this call since, as stated by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali:

> "social peace is as important as strategic or political peace". (*A/47//277, para. 59*)

This issue is of utmost importance to Trinidad and Tobago, which has not been spared the ravaging effects of a decline in economic activity. The price of the single product which represents the mainstay of our economy, and which accounts for more than 40 per cent of government revenue and over 80 per cent of foreign exchange earnings, has been in steady decline. This reality, and the structural adjustment policies which have had to be implemented in support of long-term development, have resulted in serious dislocations in the short term. The ranks of the unemployed have grown to approximately 20 per cent and there is an increasing need to provide safety nets for the more vulnerable in this society at a time when government revenue continues to fall.

Further, Trinidad and Tobago's very capacity to provide sufficient social services to those not in a position to make the burdensome sacrifices required of the general population has also been severely hampered by onerous debt-servicing payments. These challenges which we are experiencing in Trinidad and Tobago are widely shared by other developing countries.

The same spirit of cooperation and activism which now characterizes the United Nations approach to political and security questions must also impel the international community to address economic and social questions with an equal sense of urgency. The United Nations agenda for development, which the Secretary-General has been mandated to prepare, must be given priority attention in the year ahead. In this context, and with the aim of forging a new partnership in the quest for solutions to global economic problems, it may be opportune to consider the convening of a world economic summit.

Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that the United Nations agenda for development should not be restricted to providing guidelines for future action by the United Nations in the economic and social sectors. It should also include recommendations for strengthening the capacity of this Organization to enhance international cooperation in these fields and to promote the advancement of developing countries.

At its forty-seventh session the General Assembly reaffirmed that development is a shared responsibility. If our collective war on poverty, disease, unemployment and other challenges to development is to succeed, it must also be undertaken on the basis of a true partnership, a

partnership involving individuals, States, regional and international organizations and non-governmental entities, for we must engender a sense of inclusion among all of society's economic and social actors, while giving due recognition to their respective roles and responsibilities.

However, Trinidad and Tobago also shares the perspective of the Secretary-General, as stated in his 1993 report on the work of the Organization, that

> "States and their sovereignty are increasingly recognized as indispensable building-blocks of international order and problem-solving." *(A/48/1, para. 13)*

While all credible entities should be allowed to contribute to their greatest potential towards our shared objectives, States must not be deprived of the proper tools of governance and the opportunity to utilize them effectively on the basis of considered national strategies and priorities.

The concept of partnership must apply equally to the area of development finance and to trade. As regards the latter, Trinidad and Tobago has steered the steady course of trade liberalization but, like many other developing nations, has encountered persistent restrictions in the markets of the industrialized countries. It is hoped that the formation of mega-trading blocs will not compound these difficulties further.

We witnessed the application of the principle of global partnership in the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the adoption of Agenda 21 in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. To date the first important steps have been taken towards the implementation of the comprehensive programme of activities for sustainable development contained in Agenda 21. The 1994 Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States presents the next important opportunity for the international community to demonstrate the continued political will to fulfil the commitments undertaken at the Earth Summit in 1992.

For small island nations like Trinidad and Tobago, this Global Conference, to be held in Barbados in April of next year, is critical to our efforts to forge, with the assistance of the international community, appropriate strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, as it pertains to our specific situation. We strongly believe that small States should not be penalized for their limited capacity to inflict major damage on the global environment. Positive recognition should instead be given to their greater propensity for attracting a disproportionate share of environmental damage. Trinidad and Tobago hopes that adequate concessional funds will be provided for the sustainable-development activities of the small island developing States, as an important complement to initiatives taken at the national and regional levels.

The urgency that developing countries, such as my own, attach to the elaboration of the proposed agenda for development signals the importance we attach to achieving a proper balance in the level of resources devoted to political and security questions and those allocated to economic and social programmes. The World Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and the preparations for these Conferences, will also contribute significantly to a strengthened economic and social agenda within the United Nations.

In addition, it is our hope that substantive preparations for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development will reinforce the importance of focusing on the ultimate objective of our development policies and programmes: the well-being and advancement of people.

Trinidad and Tobago intends to follow closely the high-level plenary discussions to be held on international cooperation in the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug-trafficking. Our country has fallen victim to the increased transit of illegal drugs through its territory. As is often the case, increased levels of illicit trafficking have led to widespread drug abuse and an accompanying rise in other crimes. We note that this problem continues to plague a growing number of nations and therefore urge that higher priority be given to the United Nations programmes designed to combat this menace.

The United Nations has not been provided with the financial resources needed to implement its legislative mandates. We have now exhausted some of the funds from which relief was frequently obtained in past years, resulting in a serious threat to the daily operations of the Organization. However, while it will be readily agreed that any organization must be provided with the resources it needs to carry out its functions, it must also be admitted that there is a growing imbalance between the demands being made upon the United Nations and the ability of a growing number of States to meet the cost of these demands. This is particularly the case with the peace-keeping budget, which in 1993 is expected to be almost three times the amount of the regular budget.

The United Nations is now in a critical period of adjustment and reorientation. Trinidad and Tobago

concurs with the view that there must be improvements in the administrative and operational performance of the United Nations in all its activities. Transparency and accountability must be the watchwords of the Organization.

As we approach our fiftieth anniversary, we the States Members of the United Nations must remain steadfast in our support for the fundamental purposes and principles which have promoted order and security in the world community. We must also meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities presented by the altered global environment. Let us forge ahead, confident in our ability to work together and to succeed in advancing the cause of peace and development.

Mr. Gyaw (Myanmar): I wish at the outset to extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Your election reflects the Assembly's full confidence in you. My delegation feels sure that we can count on your wide experience and personal skills to guide our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion. Allow me also to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, for his tireless efforts to ensure the success of the forty-seventh session.

I am pleased to see among us delegations from the six new Member States which joined the Organization this year. Their presence in this Hall reflects the momentous changes taking place in the world today and the growing confidence in the United Nations itself. My delegation feels that these new Members, each with its own distinctive historical, cultural and political backgrounds, will have important contributions to make to the Organization. My delegation welcomes them all and looks forward to working with them.

It is an outstanding feature of our times that the number of sovereign States has increased and that the role of the Organization has grown enormously. There is today a remarkable growth in the demand for the services of the United Nations. As noted by the Secretary-General, the Organization has in the past four years become involved in as many peace-keeping operations as it had in the previous four decades. The United Nations is increasingly called upon to pour oil on troubled waters. Its peace-keeping missions are being carried out across the globe, from Somalia to Cambodia, and its agencies for development and humanitarian affairs have fanned out even further afield. As the United Nations assumes a more central role in the area of international security, it is essential that the Organization, in pursuit of the purposes stated in Article 1, act and be seen to act in accordance with the principles of the Charter. Myanmar would like to believe that in the post-cold-war era, States will adhere strictly to the Charter's principles and make concerted efforts to establish a workable system of collective security. Just as the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State is fundamental in inter-State relations, the Charter unambiguously prohibits, in the well-known paragraph 7 of Article 2, any intervention of the United Nations itself "in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State". This prohibition applies equally to States and to other international organizations. In this time of major political and economic changes in a volatile world, extraordinary care should be taken to uphold such basic principles as respect for the territorial integrity or political independence of States.

Myanmar fully supports the Security Council's recommendation of 28 May 1993, which states that the Council considers that United Nations peace-keeping operations should be conducted in accordance with operational principles consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Those operational principles include a clear political goal with a precise mandate subject to periodic review and to change in its character or duration only by the Council itself; the consent of the Government and, where appropriate the parties concerned, save in exceptional cases; support for a political process or for the peaceful settlement of the dispute; and impartiality in implementing Security Council decisions.

The experience in Somalia underscores the need to adhere to those principles in all peace-keeping and peacemaking operations. In particular, it underscores the need to exercise great prudence in sanctioning the use of force in such operations and in its application on the ground. It has also shown that peace-keeping operations cannot succeed without the willing cooperation of all the parties concerned.

The conscience of the world has been troubled by the horror of the ongoing conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While it is true that the United Nations has taken some action in response to the crisis and that negotiations have been initiated in Geneva, much more needs to be done to stop the fighting and find a peaceful solution. The situation is complex but it must be realized that innocent men, women and children in the besieged towns and villages expect more of an international Organization whose principal purpose is the maintenance of international peace and security. Unless appropriate actions are taken,

the United Nations runs the risk of being seen as protecting only certain countries or interests.

My delegation is pleased to note that in Cambodia, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia has successfully discharged its main responsibility of supervising, monitoring and verifying the cease-fire and of organizing and conducting free and fair elections as scheduled, despite the decision of one of the Cambodian parties to stay away from the elections. The United Nations efforts to foster a democratic process and to bring back peace and stability to a country ravaged by two decades of civil strife and war is an outstanding achievement. We should like to take this opportunity to pay a warm and special tribute to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who handled a very delicate situation with great prudence and tact. This achievement has made it possible for the people of Cambodia to promulgate a new Constitution restoring the monarchy and to form a broadly based Government. The accession to the throne of Cambodia by His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, a great patriot and statesman, is a historic event which augurs well for the rebuilding of a peaceful, unified and democratic Cambodia. As close neighbours, we look forward to peace and stability in Cambodia and to working closely with the Government and the people of Cambodia.

The effort to end apartheid in South Africa, sustained over decades, has produced positive results. The announcement of an election date, 27 April 1994, for the first general elections in South Africa's history based on universal franchise is a significant achievement. The elections will provide the black majority the opportunity to shape its own destiny by participating in a process which it had hitherto been denied. It is our hope that this will ensure that the objective of the people of South Africa for a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa will be achieved. Much, however, remains to be done to maintain the election timetable, and the next six months will be critical in ending apartheid. We note that four pieces of legislation - the Independent Electoral Commission, the Independent Media Commission, the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the Transitional Executive Council - have been adopted by both the Negotiating Council and the South African Parliament. We hope that these bodies will be established as soon as possible to guide the country through the constitutional process.

I am happy to note that the winds of change blowing across our world have not left the Middle East untouched. The historic agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on mutual recognition has effectively removed a major obstacle to peace in that region. We welcome this positive step and the signing of the Declaration of Principles, which envisions self-rule by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho. We are also pleased to note that Israel and Jordan have signed the agreed common agenda of the peace negotiations between them. We congratulate all parties concerned for displaying rare courage and mutual accommodation in reaching the accords. These important steps, we hope, will open the way to reconciliation between neighbours and to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The new climate of cooperation between the United States of America and the Russian Federation opens up at least the prospect of real progress in disarmament. This is amply demonstrated by the signing of the chemical weapons Convention in Paris earlier this year by an unprecedented number of countries. Myanmar was part of the Geneva Conference process leading to that comprehensive instrument, and continues to take an active part in the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The increased attention we have been devoting to chemical weapons should not distract us from nuclear disarmament issues, notably from the need to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and to ban all nuclear testing. The enormous quantities of nuclear material that exist in the world today and the increasing difficulty of detecting the clandestine development of nuclear weapons underscore the need to redouble efforts to strengthen safeguards against proliferation. Myanmar will work with other delegations for the success of the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review and extension Conference.

With the end of the Cold War, the case for reducing the number of large strategic nuclear weapons is strong. The United States and Russia should reduce their forces more drastically than they agreed to in START II and refrain from improving their nuclear arsenals both qualitatively and quantitatively. Meanwhile every effort must be made to fulfill the commitment undertaken in the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. A comprehensive ban on nuclear testing has been a long-standing objective of the international community, including Myanmar. We hope that this objective will be achieved at the earliest possible date, preferably before the NPT review and extension Conference convenes.

The global economic recovery remains high on the international agenda. In a highly interdependent global economy, the prosperity and growth of the developed and the developing countries are intertwined. We therefore welcome the statement of the Group of Seven at the Tokyo Summit which recognizes that sustainable development and integration of the developing countries into the world economy is essential for global peace and prosperity. We look forward to the concretization of the commitment by the Group of Seven to pursue a comprehensive approach covering aid, trade, investment and debt strategy.

Debt strategy, in our view, should not be carried out on a case-by-case basis. It should be comprehensive for all debtor countries. We are encouraged by the statement that the major industrialized countries are determined to curb protectionism and that no recourse will be made to initiatives and arrangements that threaten to undermine the open multilateral system. High priority must be given to the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. The Punta del Este Declaration is still valid, as are the provisions therein on special and differential treatment for the developing countries.

We have always subscribed to the view that the United Nations occupies a unique position as a major forum for the promotion of international cooperation for development. It has now been universally recognized that world peace and security, to be enduring must be underpinned by economic and social development worldwide. In this regard we share your view, Mr. President, that "An Agenda for Peace" must now be complemented by "An Agenda for Development". We ardently hope that deliberations on this topic at the current session of the General Assembly will lead to enhanced international cooperation for development, thereby contributing to global economic recovery and international peace.

In Myanmar we believe that political progress and economic development are interdependent and that both are vital to the well-being of the country. For this reason we have been endeavouring to ensure political stability while promoting economic reforms. Last year I stated here that steps were being taken to convene a National Convention in order to formulate guidelines for a firm and enduring constitution.I am now happy to report that the National Convention commenced work on 9 January of this year. The Convention is an essential prerequisite for the building of a democratic society in Myanmar, and its significance can hardly be overemphasized. It has the participation of nearly 700 delegates comprising elected representatives, representatives of the national races, political parties, peasants, workers, intelligentsia and technocrats, State service personnel, and specially invited persons. There is universal agreement that the objectives of the Convention should be to uphold the principles of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of national sovereignty; to nurture the universal values of justice, liberty and equality; and to enable the *Tatmadaw*, the Myanmar Defence Services, to participate in a leading role in national politics.

Following intensive deliberations, agreement has been reached on the chapter on the fundamental principles of the State, which is of paramount importance as it embodies the essence of the new constitution. Following extensive discussions, consensus has also been reached on these Fundamental Principles. In a period of nine months much has been accomplished. Much of course remains to be done. The Convention is presently in recess in order to provide time for the delegates to make necessary preparations for the next phase, which will commence on 18 January 1994.

The delegates to the Convention have had the opportunity to study the Constitutions of various countries so that they may cull the best from around the world. However, there can be no single model that can be copied and superimposed on Myanmar. The constitution to be drafted must be in harmony with our own conditions and reflect the wishes and aspirations of the entire nation. The history of the modern nation of Myanmar is synonymous with the history of the *Tatmadaw*. Since the time of our struggle for national independence it has been in the forefront of national politics. On four occasions since independence when the country's national sovereignty and independence were threatened, the *Tatmadaw* was called upon to shoulder national responsibilities to protect and safeguard the nation. The *Tatmadaw* does not covet power. Nor does it have any desire to hold on to the reins of power. It is above party politics. However, as it represents the single disciplined organization in the nation it is incumbent upon it to play a leading role in national politics, safeguarding the nation, national unity and national sovereignty.

On the economic front, efforts are being made to ensure a smooth transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Now that teething pains have been overcome the economy is on the mend. It is significant that the gross domestic product grew by 10.9 per cent in 1992-1993. The private sector, which only a few years ago was almost non-existent, is expanding. Today there are a growing number of investors, both local and foreign, in fisheries, mining, oil exploration,

manufacturing and various other sectors. Major offshore oil and gas finds in our waters have also heightened interest among friends and neighbours in establishing mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

The political and economic changes are evidenced by the vast transformations taking place in much of the country. In both urban and rural areas, as well as in the border regions, there is unprecedented infrastructure building: schools, hospitals and dispensaries, as well as railways, roads, bridges and multi-purpose dams, are going up everywhere. That the people's living standards are rising is plain for all disinterested observers to see.

In spite of the positive political and economic changes taking place in Myanmar, some continue to point an accusing finger at us in regard to human rights. It bears repeating that when we speak of human rights, the diversity of our people's historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must neither be minimized nor forgotten. There is no unique model of implementation of human rights that can be superimposed on a given country. Any attempt to do so would only spell chaos. If parts of the international community are now beginning to contemplate the use of the issue of human rights as a pretext for intervening in domestic affairs of States, they will only undermine the very rights they wish to protect and promote.

Poverty is one of the most pressing human rights issues in our world today, and that is what we should seek to overcome. In Myanmar we are giving priority to the elimination of poverty and the narrowing of the gap between the rich and the poor, the city dwellers and the rural folk. We are redoubling our efforts to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunity in their access to food, housing, transportation, employment, education and health services.

On our western borders, over 40,000 returnees from Bangladesh have been systematically received and returned to their hearth and home. This is the result of the good-neighbourly relations that exist between Myanmar and Bangladesh. In accordance with the agreement reached between the two countries in April 1992, we will continue to receive those who are eligible to come as soon as their cases can be processed by the authorities concerned in the camps. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who visited Myanmar recently, has been fully briefed on the important measures we have taken. A memorandum of understanding between Myanmar and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will be signed shortly; it will provide for the latter's presence on the Myanmar side of the border. We understand the need to find a lasting solution to the complex problem of transborder migration for economic or environmental reasons, and to that end we intend to hold consultations with our Bangladeshi friends.

It has been our consistent policy to cooperate fully with the United Nations in every field, including human rights. Not only have we furnished information sought by various United Nations bodies dealing with human rights; we also received in 1992 the Special Rapporteur appointed by the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Yozo Yokota. We will receive him yet again this year to demonstrate our good will. It is our hope that Myanmar's traditional respect for human rights as well as the remarkable changes taking place throughout the length and breadth of the country - from the cities and towns to the border areas - will be seen and appreciated.

Through the constructive measures taken in the past five years, 10 terrorist groups have now returned to the legal fold. Just last week, as the result of negotiations held between the Government and Kachin national leaders in a spirit of mutual accommodation and understanding as befits blood brothers, the Kachin terrorist group returned to the legal fold and has already joined hands with the Government in promoting peace and prosperity in the Kachin state. Just as the representatives of the nine preceding groups are actively participating in the National Convention, the representatives of this group, too, will enjoy the same rights. It augurs well for the peace and unity of our country that these 10 terrorist groups which have renounced the use of force have been reintegrated into the national mainstream.

The return of our prodigal sons from 10 different national races gives the lie to allegations that minority groups in Myanmar are being oppressed, that their human rights are being grossly violated and that democracy is non-existent in the country. Never before in the history of independent Myanmar have so many terrorist groups returned to the legal fold in such numbers. That they have done so is unmistakable testimony to the complete trust and confidence which the national races have in the policy of national reconciliation espoused by the State Law and Order Restoration Council and in its good will and sincerity. Few Governments can claim such positive achievements.

The problem of illicit drugs is like a cancer that poses a great threat to the stability and well-being not only of our country but also of the international community. Myanmar remains steadfast in its resolve to overcome this scourge.

We realize that the problem of illicit drugs and trafficking transcends borders and is too complex to be tackled by any country acting alone. We have accordingly been working together with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and neighbouring countries to expand activities aimed at reducing the supply of illicit drugs and eventually eliminating opium cultivation altogether. In June 1992 Myanmar took the initiative by signing agreements with the People's Republic of China and the UNDCP and also with Thailand and the UNDCP regarding crop substitution, demand reduction and law enforcement. UNDCP experts are already in the country working to achieve these goals. Myanmar and Laos have also agreed to cooperate in this regard. The Governments of Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and China, aware that the problems of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse can be addressed only through concerted international efforts, will sign a memorandum of understanding with the UNDCP during the course of the high-level plenary meetings of the General Assembly on drug control to be held in New York from 26 to 27 October.

Last April, Myanmar signed a drug agreement with India, and a similar agreement will be worked out with our remaining neighbour, Bangladesh. We are confident that this comprehensive and coordinated effort at the subregional level will produce the desired results. In the past year the strategy of combining prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, law enforcement and border area development has borne fruit. Significant amounts of illicit drugs and drug paraphernalia have been seized and destroyed. United Nations personnel and other visitors have been given the opportunity to visit the regions where opium is grown.

In August, United States Congressman Charles B. Rangel, Chairman of the House Narcotics Abuse and Control Committee, and Congressman Bill Richardson visited eastern Shan State to acquire first-hand knowledge of the illicit drug problem. During the visit they witnessed the destruction of large amounts of opium, heroin, opium oil, liquid opium and other drugs seized by the Myanmar authorities. Myanmar will continue to give top priority to overcoming the threat posed by illicit drugs, and it is our hope that more and more countries will join hands with us in this noble endeavour.

Myanmar today is on the threshold of a new era. The political, economic, social and administrative reforms currently being implemented herald a united, stable, peaceful and prosperous country. The new society will guarantee the unity of the national races and ensure the perpetuation of our national independence and sovereignty. It will be in harmony with its environment, its historical experiences, and the political, economic and social conditions of the nation. It will reflect the diverse culture and traditions of the national races in the union.

The new Myanmar nation that is envisaged by the National Convention will be a genuine multi-party democratic state. It will be a nation based on the universal values of justice, liberty and equality. There will be social justice, economic justice and political justice. There will be a complete separation of powers of state, and the judiciary will enjoy total independence. Freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom of worship, freedom to seek a livelihood and freedom of organization will be guaranteed. There will also be equality of status, equality of opportunity and equality before the law.

These conditions will not materialize of their own accord. The right atmosphere must be created. To this end, my Government is doing its utmost to vindicate the trust placed in it by the people. As the democratic society envisaged is for the people of Myanmar, it must reflect the objective conditions of the country and be established in the manner and at the pace best suited to it.

Allow me to conclude by saying that the *Tatmadaw* have never failed the people in their hour of need and will not do so at this historic moment when a new nation is being created.

Mr. TAITT (Barbados): Permit me, Sir, on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados, to express our profound appreciation of the high honour which the international community has done to our region by your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. As I join all those who have offered you congratulations from this rostrum, I feel bound to note with pride the considerable diplomatic skill, experience and commitment which you bring to the Chair and which allow my delegation the confidence to anticipate a most successful and satisfactory session.

May I also commend your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for having safely guided us through the demanding deliberations of the forty-seventh session.

We particularly thank the Secretary-General for his valiant efforts to secure international peace and security.

Barbados welcomes Andorra, Eritrea, the Czech Republic, Monaco, Macedonia and Slovakia to membership

of this great Organization, which we are sure will benefit from their participation.

It augurs well for the outcome of this session of the General Assembly that it has started against a backdrop of some success - however tenuous - in Haiti, in South Africa and in the Middle East. The cases of the Middle East and South Africa, especially, represent triumphs of diplomacy and patient negotiation. In this regard, no praise is too high for Norway's outstanding contribution in guiding seemingly intractable enemies along the difficult and daring path towards peace. As we in Barbados laud such a remarkable achievement, we hope fervently that it will lead soon to the long-sought goals of an Israel within secure boundaries and a homeland for the Palestinian people, goals envisaged in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We dare to hope, too, that that reality, once achieved, will lead to a lasting peace in the region.

In South Africa, despite the carefully orchestrated campaign of violence and terrorism aimed at subverting every effort to create a non-racial, democratic South Africa, President de Klerk African National Congress President, Nelson Mandela have, with truly remarkable courage and foresight, brought their country to the point where the transition to democracy has now been enshrined in the laws of South Africa. Barbados rejoices that a date has been fixed for the holding of universal elections, and we welcome the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council to prepare for those elections.

In praising those two leaders, we must not overlook the significant contributions of the President of the Pan-Africanist Congress, Mr. Clarence Makwetu, and the many patriots on all sides, present and past, who have made and continue to make their various contributions, sometimes even to the extent of the supreme sacrifice. The encouraging progress in South Africa demands and deserves, no less than the process in the Middle East, the wholehearted support of the international community.

The issue of Haiti is a matter of extreme importance to the peace and security of the people of the Caribbean. You are well aware, Sir, that the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community were long convinced that the unfortunate and unacceptable state of affairs resulting from the overthrow of the elected President of Haiti could be resolved only through the intervention of the Security Council, the valiant efforts of the Organization of American States notwithstanding.

The fact that the Governors Island Agreement was signed so soon after the adoption of Security Council resolution 841 (1993) would seem to justify our consistent position. Today we continue to be apprehensive over the level and nature of the widespread turmoil in Port-au-Prince, turmoil which seems designed to delay, if not derail, the return of President Aristide to his rightful place. The international community in general, and the Security Council in particular, must not sit idly by, merely expressing regret at the sorry state of affairs in that unhappy country. The Security Council - indeed, all of our countries - must be prepared to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the murders and assassinations cease. All parties must be made to honour the Governors Island Agreement and the results of the 1991 elections.

There is another issue which the people of the Caribbean have contemplated with more or less trepidation during the past 34 years. And although none of them might have an immediate solution to offer, many believe that nothing would bring more joy to the people of the region than the announcement of an impending rapprochement between the Republic of Cuba and our great neighbour to the north. In the light of recent international events, Barbados refuses to believe that only between these two countries can no path to a peaceful resolution of their conflict be found.

Four years ago in Barbados we celebrated the 350th anniversary of parliamentary practice. And it is in that context that we applaud the United Nations for its role in the conduct of successful elections in Angola and Cambodia. While we are pleased at the post-election progress being made in Cambodia, we are concerned about the deterioration in Angola. We urge the international community to be more vigilant in monitoring events in Angola. The comity of nations has a duty to ensure that the results of free and fair elections are accepted and respected by all parties - in Haiti, in Angola, in Cambodia or wherever else there is involvement by the United Nations in any such process. No party anywhere should ever be allowed even to think that the international community would tolerate the frustration of properly conducted election exercises.

Barbados remains convinced that the international community must adopt an integrated approach to peace, an approach which concentrates on building and preserving peace rather than on mere peace-keeping. Barbados therefore appreciates the attention currently being paid by this Organization to international security and peace-keeping. Indeed, we welcome the recent adoption of General Assembly resolution 47/120, endorsing the

Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace". We recognize that, in the search for consensus, the interests of all parties have not been fully addressed, but we consider that the reforms recommended represent a useful first step towards the enhanced role the United Nations is called upon to play in the promotion of international peace and security.

International peace and security can hardly be attained if the global environment continues to be sullied by rampant human rights abuses. Barbados welcomes the advances contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, particularly the re-emphasis of the universality of human rights and the right to development as a human right. However, we must here reiterate that the widespread resurgence of racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, ethnic conflicts and various other forms of human rights abuses pose a most serious threat to the peace and security of all of us.

The proposal to create a post of high commissioner for human rights was such a contentious issue at the World Conference for Human Rights that it has been referred to this session for action. Barbados considers that before such a post is established the following considerations should be taken into account. First, the mandate of the high commissioner should be satisfactorily defined. Secondly, there should be adequate safeguards to ensure the commissioner's independence and neutrality. Thirdly, the office of the high commissioner should not be manipulated to achieve the political ends of any State. Fourthly, the high commissioner should be empowered to investigate alleged human rights abuses across all borders, and not on a selective basis.

Barbados believes that preventive measures taken to guarantee international peace and security must also include efforts to safeguard basic social and economic rights. However, we are equally convinced that not enough is being done to address development problems. We concur in the Secretary-General's view that respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy cannot survive outside a framework of adequate development. Where access to food, clothing, shelter, education, health and the opportunity for gainful employment is denied, democracy cannot flourish.

In spite of 50 years of unprecedented technological progress, in many parts of the world abject poverty still persists. An estimated 1.1 billion persons, or one-fifth of humankind, are unable to afford even minimally acceptable levels of food and shelter. This problem, though concentrated largely within the developing world, has transcended national boundaries and now affects persons in the developing and developed countries alike. Low commodity prices, lack of investment capital, the inability to secure access to world markets, and high unemployment and low productivity have contributed to the marginalization of millions of unfortunate persons.

Particularly hard hit are our young people, among whom disillusionment and despair have already begun to take their toll, driving a growing number of them to resort to various forms of anti-social behaviour, including drug trafficking and drug abuse. This desperate situation will not disappear because of speeches denouncing poverty, or the adoption of resolutions calling for its elimination. Rather, we must urgently adopt radical measures designed to attack and eliminate the conditions which fuel the growing and unacceptable levels of poverty in our societies.

Barbados considers that social development will be among the greatest challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century. We therefore regard the convocation of the World Summit on Social Development, scheduled for Copenhagen in 1995, as a clear signal that social development has become a priority issue on the world agenda. Barbados believes that that Summit will provide the international community with an opportunity to direct attention to the acute problems relating to development. Our conviction is that the focus of the development debate must be shifted to human development and that bold initiatives must be taken to combat poverty and to lighten the burden which structural adjustment places on the most vulnerable in our societies - our women and our children.

Barbados is heartened by the Secretary-General's "agenda for development" proposal and looks forward with interest to reviewing the report requested in General Assembly resolution 47/181. We also welcome the timely initiative taken by the Government of Papua New Guinea, an initiative in which I understand you yourself, Mr. President, have no small interest. My delegation hopes that this matter will be given the serious and urgent consideration it merits.

Among the deterrents to development, drug trafficking remains one source of grave concern to the Governments of the Caribbean. Apart from the tragic consequences that drug addiction has for the health of our people, illegal drugs constitute the single most pervasive ingredient of increased crime in our societies. In Barbados, for example, the majority of criminal cases brought before the courts involve directly or indirectly some linkage to drugs. Penal and health systems are being stretched to their limits, while

the financial implications of enforcement and rehabilitation are staggering. Not even developed countries have yet been able to eradicate from their societies drug abuse and its mirror-image, drug trafficking. Developing countries are still further disadvantaged by their chronic inability to take on the powerful drug cartels and the narco-terrorists with any hope of real success. The problem is transnational in scope.

It is therefore imperative that the Global Programme of Action adopted at the 1990 special session on drugs be implemented as soon as possible and that cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels be enhanced. The role of the United Nations Drug Control Programme is vital to this process. Barbados looks forward to the four high-level special plenary meetings scheduled to take place during this session. We expect that further measures to combat the universal scourge of drug abuse will emerge, along with the provision of the adequate funding necessary to achieve these ends.

It has been a year now since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was convened in Rio de Janeiro. Since that time, other matters - primarily matters of peace and security - have helped to push environment and development issues out of the limelight. The meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, charged with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21, served to remind us that sustainable development must continue to receive serious attention from the international community. The Commission succeeded in generating the necessary political will to impart a powerful impetus to national action for the implementation of Agenda 21. We can ill afford any loss in momentum.

This brings me to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which the Government of Barbados has offered to host. The Conference will take place in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994. The Government and people of Barbados are honoured that the international community has, in accepting our offer, placed its confidence in our capacity to host successfully a conference of this size and importance. The Conference will be the first of the follow-up activities of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be completed. It presents an early opportunity for the implementation of the commitments reached at the Rio Earth Summit. As such, the Conference also represents a test of the political will of the international community to match the solemn commitments of Agenda 21 with real action towards more sustainable development.

My colleague the Minister of the Environment, Housing and Lands of Barbados recently briefed the Preparatory Committee of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States on the progress of preparations for the Conference. My delegation will submit details on further progress when the item comes up for discussion in the substantive Committee. However, let me at this stage put on record my Government's appreciation of the spirit and atmosphere which prevailed in the Preparatory Committee. Unfortunately, the meeting of the Preparatory Committee fell victim to the emergency conference-servicing measures announced by the Secretary-General on 26 August 1993 and for that and other reasons the preparatory process did not go as far as it might have. Barbados shares the view, expressed by many delegations attending the meeting of the Preparatory Committee, that it would be dangerous to leave finalization of the preparatory process until April 1994 in Barbados. Given the number and complexity of the issues left outstanding from the Preparatory Committee, Barbados is convinced that some arrangements must be put in place to continue the preparatory process. We therefore look forward to working with interested delegations towards reaching agreement on an appropriate mechanism for continuing the preparatory process prior to the commencement of the Conference.

The Barbados Conference will provide the basis for the building of a partnership for the implementation of the decisions taken at Rio. The international community will be afforded the opportunity to signal its commitment to move forward towards more sustainable patterns of development in a pragmatic, realistic manner, based on practical, achievable goals. The people of Barbados look forward eagerly to welcoming representatives of each and every Member State in April 1994.

The threat of natural disasters to the sustained development of small developing countries must not be underestimated. Barbados applauds the efforts of all those associated with the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, to lessen the vulnerability of those communities most susceptible to such disasters. We consider it essential that response capabilities in this area be improved with all deliberate speed.

Barbados is collaborating closely with the Caribbean Disaster Preparedness Agency, the Caribbean Regional System, and with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization to continue to improve its capacity to bounce back from the effects of a grade five-hurricane or to be able to come to the aid of any of our Caribbean neighbours who may fall victim to any

natural disasters. I am happy to be able to report that across our region we have succeeded to some degree, at great expenditure of effort and resources, in improving our capability to mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

Barbados supports wholeheartedly the current initiative of the United Nations to fashion a safer environment for all. The Organization is now called upon to expand its activities over wide areas of the globe. The new freedom of action reflects the current geopolitical reality. A new configuration of power is taking shape. While it is too early to determine the outcome we must seek to mould this new phenomenon into an instrument for the preservation of peace and security and for the alleviation of human suffering everywhere.

The Secretary-General has not missed an opportunity in recent times to highlight the dichotomy with which he is faced. He continues to point out that additional mandates are being heaped upon the Organization as a result of the new climate without a corresponding willingness to provide adequate resources for their execution. Barbados strongly supports the expressions of concern by the Secretary-General. We urge all Member States to do the best they can to correct this unsatisfactory situation. It is clear that there are some States whose capacity to pay may temporarily outstrip their actual ability to pay, but it is unconscionable for those who can pay not to do so. I trust, Mr. President, that under your expert guidance the General Assembly will finally be able to take appropriate measures to address the financial crisis threatening the very existence of the Organization.

Barbados accepts that the Security Council must always be allowed to function without unnecessary hindrance. We recognize equally clearly the principle of accountability. The Council has served its purpose well in the past, but changing times and circumstances dictate the need for an enhanced participation.

Twenty-seven years ago as a member of my country's first delegation, I sat in this Hall and listened to the then Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Errol Barrow, deliver his inaugural address to the Assembly at its twenty-first session.

In the intervening years though much has changed much has remained the same. Small countries like mine still belong to the submerged two thirds of the world's population, and where we manage by our own painful efforts to raise our living standards we are faced with the prospect of graduation. To be faced with graduation on the one hand and structural adjustment on the other is to be caught between Scylla and Charybdis. Once again Barbados would urge with all the power at its command that the constant threat of graduation be lifted from the vulnerable economies of small, developing countries.

In looking back over those 27 years with their ups and downs, their triumphs and disappointments, through prosperity and adversity, graduation and structural adjustment, as Mr. Barrow was on that day, I too am reminded of John Bunyan's Mr. Valiant For Truth when he said:

> "Tho with great difficulty I am got hither,
> Yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive where I am."

Mr. GATTI (San Marino) *(spoke in Italian: English text furnished by the delegation)*: More than 12 months ago, addressing the Assembly, which since then has seen a steady increase in its membership, with the admission of new Members that I welcome today with great pleasure, I expressed my personal satisfaction and that of the people of the Republic of San Marino over the momentous changes that have marked these past hectic years.

Today, however, we face the pressing and serious problem of managing those changes. It is of fundamental importance to those peoples who have seen the laying of the foundations of the edifice called "Democracy" that this process continue and be shored up by solid institutions. The strengthening of those institutions must be accomplished to guarantee the solidity of that essential edifice, which may be altered or changed in some of its parts, but which cannot be deprived of its foundations.

Today more than ever, the importance of democratic institutions must be acknowledged, upheld and stressed. Now more than ever, peoples need to be assured that struggles for power, those between factions and those caused by ethnic, economic and political interests, will be averted for ever so that real peace may be made, restored and maintained.

My country is convinced that a renewed commitment of the United Nations is necessary for the attainment of this aim, in virtue of the role it plays as a universal factor that has become a real point of reference for the entire world.

Not even the most advanced democratic society can fully meet the needs arising out of the exercise of freedom. In my opinion, however, any form of political regime other

than democracy would deprive man of his freedom to an even greater degree. Democracy, even in its initial and most incomplete forms, is organized in such a way that individuals may take part, directly or indirectly, in the exercise of power.

Further development of the existing democratic régime is a precise commitment that my country has undertaken in an attempt to find a solution to one of the consequences of the past emigration of its citizens. I am referring to the efforts we are making to facilitate the exercise of their right and duty to participate in political life through their votes. In our attempts to solve this problem the relevant international instruments of the United Nations will be a precise point of reference and an irreplaceable guide.

I am following with particular interest the discussion under way on the possibility of reforming the institutional mechanisms of the Organization. It is undoubtedly wise to adapt institutions to present circumstances, so that they will respond effectively to the new challenges. San Marino supports those reforms, prompted by the conviction that wider participation leads to more effective and shared interventions. That is why with my country is following with special attention the application submitted by Sweden, in its capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), for the CSCE's admission to the United Nations with Observer States. That application enjoys the full support of all participating States, and I wish to express here the desire of my country to see it accepted.

The CSCE continues to play a leading role in Europe in favour of peace and the safeguarding of human rights. Closer cooperation with the United Nations has now become indispensable, and it will surely produce positive results.

The initial task of the United Nations was to lay down the fundamental principles for the protection of human dignity and for a peaceful, democratic and civil coexistence. It then undertook a wider-ranging task, in light of the evolution of rights and of those systems established for their safeguard. Now the Organization must intensify its intervention straightforwardly and incisively in order to resolve critical situations.

The policy of pursuing the peaceful solution, resorting to negotiations, mediation and political diplomatic initiatives, is unquestionably the right course. That is the path to follow in our times; it is policy of a democratic society in which reason must always prevail.

Recourse to force, even when it seems indispensable to maintain or restore democracy, is always an unfair and dangerous option, since it takes a heavy toll of lives and creates grounds for revenge that are risky and difficult to dispel and may always trigger civil wars.

I truly hope we will not have to say one day that the magic moment when our dreams seemed to have become reality has passed us by. We must persist in averting the dangerous strategy of nuclear deterrence.

If we manage to create a world with collective security as its prevailing feature, there will no longer be grounds for conflicts. Peace, however, does not depend exclusively on the possession of weapons and on the thirst for supremacy. Today, more than ever, peace depends on solidarity, on respect for rights and on our efforts in favour of tolerance.

Europe is plagued by conflicts that offend peoples, minorities, women, children and the poor. Every continent is afflicted by wars and deep crises, which have become so endemic as to arouse the suspicion that they have been accepted as the norm. Some of the conflicts have become so acute that even humane acts, solidarity and the most indispensable interventions against hunger and cold seem now to have faded into the background.

Exhausting and sincere mediation initiatives fail; crisis-management becomes impossible; the solution of conflicts seems unattainable, despite the growing number of political, diplomatic and military missions, and even relief missions are hindered in the performance of their work.

San Marino believes that the United Nations has the ability, the authority and the structures to formulate a dynamic and effective plan able to prevent and solve conflicts, manage crises and maintain peace.

The authority and the means of the Organization may sometimes not involve military choices. In any case, such interventions can be justified only when all possibilities of a peaceful solution have been considered and it is borne in mind that resort to this option must not cause victims.

Crises and conflicts may be averted by eliminating their root causes. When riches are not fairly distributed; when all citizens do not enjoy the same rights and duties; when rights and freedoms are not respected; when it is forgotten that minorities are composed of individuals; when a distinction is made between the dignity of man and that of woman; when injustice exists; when man and his

rights do not prevail over the organization of the State and its military apparatus; then conflicts inevitably arise.

The key principle of the United Nations, which has always fascinated the people of the Republic of San Marino and has now become our trusted point of reference, is that of the indissoluble bond between personal freedom and the liberty of all peoples. That freedom must be based on a complex system of limits so that no man, in the exercise of his rights, can ride roughshod over the rights of another.

In that spirit the Republic of San Marino recently welcomed with sincere satisfaction the agreement of mutual recognition signed by the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). That agreement, concerning an area that has been theatre of war for a very long time, was reached through peaceful negotiations and political mediation in which both sides gave up something to facilitate the peace process.

This major event is an important point of reference, a proof of the existing good will and wish for certainty, confirming that this is the only possible way to resolve conflicts.

My country is convinced that many challenges have yet to be met and still await effective solutions. We have to exert our best endeavours to defend the poor from underdevelopment, to sustain and contribute to their progress by restoring to them, when the situation so requires, the environment of which they have been deprived as a consequence of ecological degradation. Every man is a guardian of the world and is entitled to ask that it be used correctly.

We must express solidarity in the forms that such a humanitarian and understanding attitude requires, respecting the dignity of peoples and their freedom to make their own choices and determine their own destinies. We must play a fundamental role in educating future generations on mutual understanding, respect and tolerance. This is the challenge facing the entire world and Europe in particular. Together we will have to overcome the consequences of intolerance to which we have given the names of racism, "ethnic cleansing", mass migrations, refuge and asylum.

The people of San Marino are following with particular concern all issues related to minorities, their inalienable right to free existence and well-balanced development, respect for their cultures and religions, and the real exercise of these rights under the same conditions enjoyed by the majorities. The reason for this special interest is probably to be found in the numerically small population of my country, which history has always taught to offer hospitality and express solidarity with the weak, the oppressed and the victims of persecution.

Today this problem has reached proportions that might become alarming. Nobody knows how many people may be forced in the future to leave their native countries in order to survive, whether in flight from underdevelopment and hunger or prompted by the desire for freedom. Thus, the problem has two faces. The first is the fact that no one should be forced to leave his home and country; the second is the fact that all people, to the extent their circumstances permit, must be willing to offer hospitality in a spirit of solidarity and brotherhood.

Having referred to this problem, I cannot fail to mention the situation affecting the former Yugoslavia, the coast of which can be seen, when the air is clear, from the mountain on which the Republic of San Marino is situated. Who knows the destiny of that poor people or when this unacceptable war will finally end? I appeal to the General Assembly, to all States of the world and to the United Nations that we put a halt to the catastrophe. Let us reiterate and strengthen within our own nations a sense of tolerance undertaken as a duty and not as a right.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.